

Glossary of Lay Terminology

MEDICAL TERM	LAY TERMINOLOGY
abdomen	belly
ablation	remove
Absorb	Take up fluids, take in
abstain	avoid
acuity	Clearness
acute	short-term; sudden onset
adenopathy	swollen glands
adjuvant	Helpful, assisting, added
adverse effect	side effect
allergic reaction	rash, trouble breathing
alopecia	hair loss
ambulate	walk, able to walk
amnesia	loss of memory; inability to remember
analgesic	pain relieving medication
anaphylaxis	a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction
anemia	low red blood cell count
anesthetize	to numb; put to sleep
angina	pain from not enough blood to the heart
anorexia	loss of appetite
antecubital	Inside the elbow
antibiotic (antimicrobial)	drug that kills germs
antibodies	natural chemicals in the body that fight infection
anticonvulsant	drug used to prevent seizures
antilipidemic	drug that decreases the level of fat in the blood
antiretroviral	drug that inhibits viruses
antitussive	drug that relieves coughing
anus	rectum
arrhythmia or dysrhythmia	a change from the normal heartbeat
artery	blood vessel
arthralgia	joint pain
aspiration	inhale into the lungs; to suck in; or removal of fluid through tube or needle
assess	to learn about
asthenia	loss of energy; weakness
asthma	lung disease associated with tightening of the air passages
asymptomatic	without symptoms
ataxia	unsteady movement
axilla	armpit

MEDICAL TERM	LAY TERMINOLOGY
bacteria	germs
benign	not cancerous; without serious consequences
BID	twice a day
bioavailability	the extent to which a drug becomes available to the body
biopsy	the removal and examination of a small part of tissue or organ
blood profile	series of blood tests
bolus	given all at once
bone density	bone thickness; hardness of bone
bradycardia	slow heart rate
bronchospasm	difficulty breathing because the airways have narrowed
confidentiality will not be compromised	other people will not find out
carcinogenic	can cause cancer
carcinoma	a type of cancer
cardiac	heart; involving the heart
cardiac catheterization	a procedure in which a small tube (catheter) is inserted through blood vessels in the groin and into the heart that uses highlighting fluid to look at the blood vessels in the heart
cardioversion	a procedure that uses electricity to simulate the heart and make it return to its normal rhythm
catheter	flexible plastic tube that is inserted into the ()
central nervous system	the brain and spinal cord
cerebral trauma	damage to the brain
cessation	stopping
chemotherapy	treatment of disease with chemical agents
chronic	continues for a long time; long-term
clinical	medical care
clinically significant	of major importance for treating or evaluating patients
clinical trial	an experiment in humans
coerced	pressured; forced
cognitive status	levels of awareness and thinking
colon	large intestines; bowel
colonoscopy	procedure to look at the large intestine that uses a special camera at the end of a long tube that is inserted in the rectum
coma	unconscious state
congenital	occurring prior to birth, due to parent's genetic input
conjunctivitis	irritation and redness in the membrane covering the eye
consent	agreement
contrast material	a fluid that is given into the vein or an area of the body to highlight the blood vessels or body area under x-ray examination

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convulsions	seizures
coronary	heart; involving the heart
creatinine clearance	a test of kidney function
computed tomography; (CT) scan	computer enhanced X-ray; special type of x-ray
culture	a test for the presence of germs
cumulative	total sum (of events, experiences, treatments)
cutaneous	of the skin
defecate	bowel movement; to pass stools
defibrillation	a procedure that uses electricity to stimulate the heart and make it return to its normal rhythm
de novo	new
dermatologic	of the skin
deteriorate	to get worse; to lose function
diastolic blood pressure	the blood pressure when the heart rests between beats; the bottom number of a blood pressure reading
diplopia	double vision
distal	away from the center of the body
distensions	bloated; swollen; inflated
diuretic	drug that causes an increase in urination
double-blind	neither you nor your doctor will know what medicine you are taking (this can be found out easily if necessary)
duodenum	beginning of the small intestine that is attached to the stomach
dysfunction	not functioning properly
dyspepsia	gas; upset stomach
dysplasia	abnormal cells
dyspnea	hard to breathe; short of breath
ECG, EKG, or electrocardiogram	picture and measurement of the heart rhythm
echocardiogram	procedure that uses sound waves to look at the heart; using sound waves to take pictures of the heart chambers and measure its pumping strength
EEG	measurement of electrical activity of the brain
edema	swelling
efficacy	effectiveness; usefulness
electrode	wire
electrolyte imbalance	imbalance of salts or chemicals in the blood
electrophysiology study	heart rhythm study
elevation of liver function tests	evidence of liver or kidney damage
elucidate	to make clear; to determine; to find out
embryo	unborn baby

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emesis	vomiting
empiric	based on experience
endoscopic exam	exam of an internal part of the body with a lighted tube
enema	medication given through the rectum that cleans out the bowel
enteral	by way of the intestines
enzyme abnormality	blood test result that suggests abnormal organ function or injured cells
epidural	outside the spinal cord
eradicating	getting rid of
exclusion criteria	reasons for not being included
excreted	made; given off; put off
external	outside of the body
extravasate	to leak outside of a blood vessel
fast	do not eat or drink
fatigue	tire
fetus	unborn baby
flatulence	gas passed through the anus/rectum
fibrillation	irregular beat of the heart or other muscle
fibrous	Having many fibers, like scar tissue
flushing	to become red in the face or other part of the body because of rush of blood to the skin; blushing of the skin
fracture	break
gastric	stomach
gastrointestinal	stomach and intestines
gestational	pertaining to pregnancy
glucose	sugar
hematocrit	amount of red blood cells in the blood
hematoma	a bruise; bleeding into the body tissue around a blood vessel (if at the skin surface, it looks like a bruise)
hemodynamic measurement	test to measure blood flow
hemolysis	breakdown in red blood cells
heparin lock	Needle placed with blood thinner to keep blood from clotting inside the needle or tubing
hepatic	liver
hepatitis	inflammation of the liver
hepatoma	cancer or tumor of the liver
heritable disease	a disease which can be passed to children resulting in damage to future children
histopathologic	pertaining to disease of body tissues or cells
history positive	in past medical history; that you have ever had

MEDICAL TERM	LAY TERMINOLOGY
Holter monitor	a machine, the size of a pocket radio, that records the beats of the heart
hypercalcemia	high blood calcium level
hyerkalemia	high blood potassium level
hypernatremia	high blood sodium level
hypertension	high blood pressure
hypocalcemia	low blood calcium level
hypokalemia	low blood potassium level
hyponatremia	low blood sodium level
hypotension	low blood pressure
hypoxia	low oxygen level in the blood
hysterectomy	removal of the womb
iatrogenic	caused by a physician or by treatment
idiopathic	of unknown cause
immobilization	unable to move
immunological	relating to the body's ability to fight infection
immunosuppressive	drug which suppresses the body's immune response
immunotherapy	drug to help the body's immune system
impaired function	abnormal function
implantation	operation to place a device inside the body
incision	cut
indicated	suggested; necessary
induce	cause
induction phase	beginning phase or stage of treatment
induration	hardening
indwelling	remaining in a given location, such as a catheter
inert	not active; substance that doesn't affect you
infectious disease	disease transmitted from person to person
inflammation	swelling
infarct	Death of tissue because of lack of blood supply
inflation	to put air in
infused	to drip in; to put in
ingest	swallow; eat or drink
inject	to put into by way of a needle or other device
insomnia	unable to sleep
instilled	put into; drip into
intensity	degree; amount
interferon	agent that acts against viruses
intermittent	occurring repeatedly; alternately stopping and starting

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intramuscular injection	to put into the muscle with a needle
intraperitoneal	into the abdominal cavity
intrathecal	into the spinal fluid
intravenous	in the blood vessel
intravenous infusion	to drip into the blood vessel through a plastic tube and needle
intravesical	in the bladder
intubate	the placement of a tube into the airway
invasive procedure	puncture, opening or cutting of the skin
ischemia	decreased oxygen in a tissue (usually because of decreased blood flow)
isolated	to separate; to close off
lactating	making breast milk
laparotomy	Incision in the abdominal wall to allow a physician to look at the organs
lesion	site of the injury; site of the disease
lethargy	Sleepiness
leukocyte	blood cells that fight infection
leukopenia	low white blood cell count
libido	sexual desire; sex drive
local anesthetic	medicine to numb an area of the body
localized	restricted to one area
lumbar puncture	spinal tap; a needle inserted between the bones of the spine to put in a drug or take a sample of fluid
lumbosacral	lower back
lymphangiography	an x-ray of the lymph nodes or tissues after injection of dye in lymph vessels
lymphocyte	a type of white blood cell
lymphoma	a cancer of the lymph nodes or tissues
maintenance dose	the usual daily dose
malaise	a vague feeling of discomfort, feeling bad
malignancy	tumor; cancer
manifested	showed
medulloblastoma	type of brain tumor
meningitis	infection or irritation around the brain
metabolism	process by which food is used to supply energy for the body; the energy the body uses when it works; the way the body breaks down food or a drug
metastasize	spread
(MRI) Magnetic Resonance Imaging	procedure that uses magnetic waves to take a picture of various parts of the body (radiation is not used)
monitor	check on; keep track of; watch carefully
morbidity	undesired result or complication; serious disease

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mortality	Death or death rate
mucosa	the lining inside the ()
MUGA	procedure using a special camera to look at the heart after radioactive dye has been put into it through one of the veins
myalgia	muscle aches
myocardial infarction	heart attack
nasal congestion	stuffiness of the nose
nasal	nose
nasogastric tube	tube from the nose to the stomach
nausea	feel sick to the stomach
necrosis	death of tissue
neoplasia	tumor, may be non-cancerous or cancerous
neurological exam	test of brain, spinal cord, and reflexes
neuroblastoma	cancer of nerve tissue
neurological	pertaining to the nervous system
neutropenia	Decrease in the main part of the white blood cells
new indication	new use
non-invasive	not breaking, cutting or entering the skin
nosocomial pneumonia	pneumonia acquired in the hospital
NG tube (nasogastric)	a flexible plastic tube that is passed through the nose or mouth and into the stomach
occlusion	Closing; obstruction
occult blood test	a test for small amounts of blood in the stool
oncology	the study of tumors or cancer
open-label	a study in which the drug, device, procedure is known to patient and investigator
ophthalmic	pertaining to the eye
optimum, optimal	best
oral	by mouth
orthopedic	pertaining to the bones
osteoarthritis	bone and joint pain
osteopetrosis	bone disorder characterized by dense bone
osteoporosis	bone disorder characterized by loss of bone
ovaries	female sex glands; female organs which release eggs
over-the-counter drugs	medications that you can buy without a doctor's prescription
overnight fast	do not eat or drink after () P.M.
palpitations	irregular heart beats that you can feel
parenteral	administration by injection
paresthesia	tingling in the ()

MEDICAL TERM	LAY TERMINOLOGY
partial seizure	seizure
perception	view
perforation	hole; tear
patency	condition of being open
pathogenesis	the initial cause of a disease
percutaneous	through the skin
perforation	puncture, tear of hole
peripheral	not central
PET (Positron Emission Tomography)	special camera that uses radiation to look at the structure and functioning of parts of the body
pharmacokinetics	Study of the what the body does to the drug
pharmacological	effect of the drug
phlebitis	Inflammation of a vein
physiologically capable	able to function
placebo	a pill that does not contain active medicine
plasma	blood
platelets	Small particle in the blood that help with blood clotting
pneumonia	lung infection
pneumothorax	collapsed lung
polyps	abnormal lumps that can sometimes be cancerous
potentiate	increasing effect of a drug by administration of another drug at the same time
potentiator	Agent that helps another agent work better
predictive value	expected value
prenatal	before birth
prognosis	expected course of the disease
prone	to lie flat facing down; to lie on the stomach
prophylaxis	Drug given to prevent disease or infection
prorated compensation	less if you do not complete the study
prospective study	study following patients forward in time
prosthesis	artificial limbs
proximal	closer to the center of the body
psychosocial test	test of your behavior
pulmonary	lung
puncture	to make a hole
pyelogram	a series of X-rays of the kidneys
QD	every day, daily
QID	four times a day
quantify	to measure

MEDICAL TERM	LAY TERMINOLOGY
radiation therapy	x-ray or cobalt treatment
radioactive isotope	a chemical or substance that gives off radiant energy rays similar to X-rays
randomly	like picking numbers out of a hat ; by chance
recombinant	formation of new combinations of genes
reconstitution	putting back together the original parts
recuperate	to get better
recur	happen again
refractory	not responding to treatment
regeneration	regrowth of a structure or of lost tissue
regimen	Pattern of administering treatment
relapse	The return or reappearance of disease
reliable method of birth control	[<i>You must indicate what you will accept. ex:--</i> birth control pills, Norplant7 (levonorgestrel), Depo-Provera7 (medroxyprogesterone), intra-uterine device (IUD)
remission	disappearance of evidence of cancer or other disease
renal	kidney
render you ineligible	make you unable to participate
replicable	capable of being duplicated
resect	remove or cut out (surgically)
respiratory	breathing
retrospective study	study looking back over past experience
saline	salt water
sarcoma	a type of cancer
secretion	one of the fluids made by the body
sedation	to make drowsy/sleepy
seminoma	a type of testes cancer
sequentially	in a row
somnolence	sleepiness
spirometer	instrument to measure the amount of air taken into and exhaled from the lungs
sputum	thick saliva; phlegm
staging	a determination of the extent of the disease
standard of care	the usual treatment for the disease
stenosis	narrowing of a duct, tube, or one of the heart valves
stent	a metal (or plastic) tube placed inside a blood vessel that keeps it open to prevent blockage
stomatitis	mouth sores; inflammation of the mouth
stratify	Arrange in groups fro analysis of results
stupor	stunned state in which it is difficult to get a response

MEDICAL TERM	LAY TERMINOLOGY
subclavian	under the collarbone
subcutaneous	under the skin
superficial	near the surface
supine	to lie flat facing up; to lie on the back
suture	stitches
symptoms	signs of disease or illness
symptomatic	having symptoms
syncope	fainting or lightheadedness
syndrome	a condition characterized by a set of symptoms
systolic blood pressure	top number of by blood pressure reading
tachycardia	fast heart rate
telemetry	to monitor the () from a distance
teratogenic	can cause malformations in unborn fetuses
testes	male sex glands; male organs which produce sperm
therapeutic dose	the amount of medication needed to treat the condition
third party payers	health insurance; Medicare, Medicaid
thrombosis	blood clotting within blood vessels
TID	three times a day
tinnitus	ringing in the ears
titration	adjusting to the necessary dose
T-lymphocytes	type of white blood cells involved in immune reactions
topical	applied to the surface of the skin
toxicity	side effects or undesirable effects of a drug
trachea	windpipe
transdermal	through the skin
transiently	temporarily
trauma	injury; wound
treadmill	walking machine often used to determine heart function
tremor	shakiness
trial	study
triglyceride	fat in the blood
tubal ligation	having the tubes tied
unable to comply with the study requirements	cannot follow study directions
ureter	the tube that carries urine from the kidneys to by bladder
urethra	the tube that carries urine from the bladder outside the body
urinalysis	urine exam; test of the urine
vaginitis	infection in the vagina or birth canal

MEDICAL TERM	LAY TERMINOLOGY
valvuloplasty	plastic repair of a valve, especially of the heart
varices	enlarged veins
vasospasm	narrowing of blood vessels due to spasm of vessel walls
vector	A carrier, usually an insect, that carries and transmits disease-causing germs
vein	blood vessel
venipuncture	to put a needle into the blood vessel
verbal	speak; talk
vertical transmission	spread of disease
vertigo	a feeling of losing the balance; dizziness
void	to make or pass urine
waive	to give up
withdraw	leave the study; quit